Southeast Arizona Economic Development Group
168 E 4th St, Benson, Arizona 85602

Contact: Southeast Arizona
Economic Development Group
NewsRelease@CochiseEconomy.com

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 28, 2026

Government Losses Weigh on Cochise County Jobs

BENSON — Data from the Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity show Cochise County's nonfarm employment averaged 33,211 jobs during the first nine months of 2026, down 978 jobs, or 2.9%, from the same period in 2025.

Total private employment in Cochise County averaged 23,200 jobs, a decrease of 433 jobs, or 1.8%. Government employment averaged 10,011 jobs, down 544, or 5.2%.

Government accounted for 55.7% of the county's overall employment decline. Private industries accounted for the remaining 44.3%.

Goods-producing employment averaged 2,667 jobs, down 33, or 1.2%. Mining and construction averaged 2,067 jobs, also a decline of 33, or 1.6%. Manufacturing was the only industry with no year-over-year change. It averaged 600 jobs in both periods.

Service-providing employment, the largest portion of the Cochise County economy, averaged 30,544 jobs. That was 944 fewer jobs, or 3%, than during the first nine months of 2025.

Private service-providing employment averaged 20,533 jobs, falling by 400, or 1.9%. Performance varied substantially among the industries within this category.

Trade, transportation and utilities recorded the largest numerical gain among Cochise County's detailed industries. Employment averaged 6,500 jobs, an increase of 89, or 1.4%.

Information employment experienced the sharpest percentage decline. The industry averaged 700 jobs, down 211, or 23.2%.

Financial activities averaged 1,000 jobs, a decrease of 22, or 2.2%. Professional and business services averaged 3,489 jobs, losing 189, or 5.1%.

Private education and health services provided one of the few gains. The industry averaged 4,689 jobs, up 22, or 0.5%.

Leisure and hospitality averaged 3,367 jobs, a reduction of 144, or 4.1%. Other services moved in the opposite direction, increasing by 56 jobs, or 7.6%, to an average of 789.

Other services posted Cochise County's largest percentage gain, although the industry's relatively small size meant that its growth could offset only a limited portion of the countywide decline.

The public sector remained the principal source of weakness in Cochise County. Federal government employment averaged 3,867 jobs, a loss of 400, or 9.4%.

State and local government employment averaged 6,144 jobs. That was 144 fewer jobs, or 2.3%, than during the same nine months of 2025.

The figures show that Cochise County's employment decline was concentrated rather than universal. Trade, transportation and utilities; private education and health services; and other services added a combined 167 jobs. Manufacturing remained unchanged.

Those results were outweighed by losses in government, information, professional and business services, leisure and hospitality, financial activities, and mining and construction.

Through the first nine months of 2026, Cochise County's labor market therefore presented a mixed but generally weaker picture. Several private industries demonstrated resilience, but their gains were not sufficient to overcome substantial government losses and declines across several service industries.

For more information on the Cochise County economy, including current and historical data, visit CochiseEconomy.com, a partnership project of Southeast Arizona Economic Development Group, Arizona G&T Cooperatives, and community sponsors.

Cochise County Employment Trends (Year-to-Date 2026)

Sector	Avg. Employment, First 9 Months 2026	Jobs Gained/Lost vs. First 9 Months 2025	% Change vs. First 9 Months 2025
Total Nonfarm Employment	33,211	-978	-2.9%
Total Private Employment	23,200	-433	-1.8%
Goods Producing	2,667	-33	-1.2%
Mining & Construction	2,067	-33	-1.6%
Manufacturing	600	0	0.0%
Service-Providing	30,544	-944	-3.0%
Private Service-Providing	20,533	-400	-1.9%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	6,500	+89	+1.4%
Information	700	-211	-23.2%
Financial Activities	1,000	-22	-2.2%
Professional & Business Services	3,489	-189	-5.1%
Private Education & Health Services	4,689	+22	+0.5%
Leisure & Hospitality	3,367	-144	-4.1%
Other Services	789	+56	+7.6%
Government	10,011	-544	-5.2%
Federal Government	3,867	-400	-9.4%
State & Local Government	6,144	-144	-2.3%

Source: Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity and US Economic Research

###